

Natural Resources and Parks

Wastewater Treatment Division



## Duwamish/Diagonal Combined Sewer Overflow and Storm Drain Sediment Cleanup Follow-up Action December 2004

King County in early 2005 plans to use an environmental cleanup method called enhanced natural recovery to reduce the impact of contaminated sediment washed into the Duwamish River during dredging a year ago.

The follow-up action will spread 5,500 tons of clean sand evenly over an area outside the southwest part of the 7-acre dredging site in the lower Duwamish. That area had the largest increase in contaminant concentration after the dredging.

An average of 7 inches of sand will cover the area and immediately reduce the exposure to organisms living in the Duwamish to polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs. Also, that amount of sand should not be enough to affect organisms that live in the sediment.

## Why is this action needed?

The contractor for King County's Wastewater Treatment Division removed an estimated 66,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment from the dredging area between November 2003 and March 2004. The project resulted in the cleanup of 7 acres of the Duwamish and removal of about 400 pounds of PCBs from the river ecosystem.

In the early stages of the cleanup, actions by the contractor dredging in the highly contaminated southwest part of the site caused excessive contaminated dredged material to escape. The contractor corrected its dredging practices, and the project continued. As planned, the contractor then placed a cap of clean material on top of the dredged area.

After the cleanup, monitoring results showed some higher levels of contamination outside the dredged and capped area—especially around the southwest part of the site. King County notified state and federal regulatory agencies and explained the results. The county also notified organizations interested in the cleanup, and possible remedies were discussed during the summer of 2004.

King County proposed the enhanced natural recovery remedy to reduce contamination levels faster.

The follow-up action will extend into the Duwamish navigation channel. But the 7-inch layer of sand will not significantly change the depth of the channel and affect navigation nor will it trigger more dredging to maintain the depth of the channel.

This project will also be studied as a possible alternative for the clean up of other lightly contaminated sites in the river. This alternative and others will be considered during a cleanup feasibility study under way as part of the Lower Duwamish Superfund process.

The regulatory agencies and King County are planning this work to take place before March 1, 2005.

This project is considered an interim action under the Washington State Model Toxics Control Act (WAC 173-340). The continuing Superfund investigation will include evaluation of the need for additional cleanup in this area of the river that may take place after the completion of the Superfund investigations.

## For more information

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